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<http://www.tv3.co.nz/News/Story/tabid/209/articleID/47590/cat/41/Default.aspx>

## Seabed to be dredged for invasive mussels from drilling ship

Thu, 28 Feb 2008 07:06a.m.

Mussel farmers through the Marlborough Sounds have been put on alert for any spread of brown mussels from Tasman Bay after an oil drilling company cleaned its rig late last year.

Biosecurity officials last night said that the semi-submersible drilling ship Ocean Patriot apparently brought the potentially-invasive brown mussels from South Africa, the last place it was cleaned.

They were found when it was defouled in December -- 22km offshore, but still in shallow waters -- to rid it of New Zealand green-lipped mussels before being towed to Australia.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is arranging to have the seafloor dredged at the site. It has asked oyster fishers for a 2km "exclusion zone" around the site until then, and has warned mussel farmers of the possibility of the brown mussel establishing.

"We have asked for any immediate reports," MAF's biosecurity incursion response manager David Yard said last night.

"I'm reasonably confident that we will get all of them," Yard told NZPA. "But if they have already spawned ... then we have much bigger problems".

"This (rig) may have been contaminated for some time and everywhere it has been it has spread the mussels ... but we have had no reported cases of brown mussels occurring in New Zealand to date".

The brown mussel is difficult to tell from native green-lipped mussels.

MAF's biosecurity incursion response manager David Yard said the initial response was focused on the seabed where the rig was cleaned in December.

The rig has been moored off Napier, the Wairarapa coast, off the Canterbury coast and in Taranaki waters, and Yard said it was possible other site might be surveyed for brown mussels.

It was not known exactly what effects there would be from establishment of the brown mussel on the doorstep of New Zealand's \$200 million mussel industry.

The species has recently invaded North America around the Gulf of Mexico and is reported to have become a nuisance at water-cooling intakes for power stations.

The pest was left on the seabed by workers cleaning the Ocean Patriot at the order of the Victorian state government, before a tow across the Tasman.

Ironically, the Australians were worried about it carrying New Zealand's green-lipped mussels into their waters.

The rig owners, Diamond Offshore Drilling Inc, complained to financial analysts on February 7 that hiring divers and blasters to remove green-lipped NZ mussels cost it \$US5 million (\$NZ6.2 million) and put the rig out of commission for 23 days.

The company is now also largely funding next week's clean-up, MAF said.

Diamond Offshore claimed that rough weather meant the defouling could not be done in the open sea. MAF gave the go-ahead to do it in Tasman Bay, as far offshore as possible, based on survey information indicating there were no unwanted organisms on the rig, and the fact that the weather was posing a threat to human safety.

A spokesman for Aquaculture NZ, Chris Choat, said it was not known how the brown mussel would adapt to life in NZ waters, and he said mussel farmers were not blaming MAF.

"They have been operating within their legislation," he said.

The defouling site was about 12 nautical miles offshore -- outside the territorial waters controlled by New Zealand - and Mr Yard said there are "huge difficulties" caused by a gap in the laws covering waters beyond territorial waters.

"We are looking at regulating bio-fouling," he said. NZ had asked the International Maritime Organisation to pursue the issue.

Yard said even if the defouling was done beyond 12 nautical miles, spawn from mussels on the rig could have survived for weeks: "If they had spawned, it's quite likely the spawn would still have hit New Zealand".

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/good-living/heres-the-catch/2008/02/26/1203788317490.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

## Here's the catch

Helen Greenwood  
February 26, 2008 - 2:22PM



Red alert ... freshly line-caught snapper.  
Photo: *Quentin Jones*

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WHAT'S A fish fancier to do? The stories about overfishing ring out like the clamour of voices intoning about global warming.

The British still wait for their Atlantic cod and halibut to return to big numbers. The Americans are taken to task for drastically reducing stocks of monkfish. West Africa is sending boatloads of immigrants instead of fish to Europe because their fisheries are in decline. Meanwhile, the Japanese are blasted for killing everything from southern bluefin tuna to humpback whales.

For Australians, the issue is not as cut and dried. There's concern among top Sydney chefs such as Neil Perry and Kylie Kwong, literary lights such as Tim Winton and high-end fishmongers who beat the drum to sound warnings about our last, great wild resource.

There are also safeguards that have been in place for years. Some of them are government-instigated, most noticeably under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Other measures have been initiated by the fishing industry. In South Australia, for example, the Lakes and Coorong fisherfolk have spent a decade turning their waterways into a sustainable fishing zone. But the question for the consumer is what to do when you find Australia's celebrity endangered swimmer, orange roughy, tempting you like the devil with fins?

This slow-growing deep-sea creature has the dubious distinction of being Australia's best-known species threatened with overfishing. Its stock levels slipped dangerously low more than two decades ago.

In 1990, a restriction on the total allowable catch of orange roughy was established. This is still in place, so if an Australian fisherman who has a quota, with the right gear and in the right area of a fishing zone catches one, it's legal. Now, do you buy it or not?

No, according to *Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide*, published by the Australian Marine Conservation Society and endorsed by Tim Winton, its patron.

The pocket-sized guide lists orange roughy as one of 16 wild-catch and farmed species to avoid buying. Southern bluefin tuna, eastern gemfish, flake or shark, redfish and swordfish also figure on its list of fish under pressure.

Winton writes in the guide's foreword, "It's generally agreed that overfishing is the single biggest threat to our oceans. An incredible three-quarters of the world's oceans are officially over-exploited or fished right up to their limit."

According to the guide's co-author, Ingrid Neilson, it was published because "people were telling us that they loved seafood and also loved their oceans and were increasingly concerned about overfishing and seeking information to make a sustainable choice".

Nick Rayns, executive manager of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, agrees the easiest way to protect endangered species is to avoid buying them. "Even with orange roughy, the recommendation is not to eat it," he says.

The authority is responsible for setting quotas for Australian fisheries in Australian fishing zones. What is sustainable is based on information from the CSIRO and the Bureau of Rural Sciences, as well as from the state fisheries agencies.

However, Rayns muddies the waters by pointing out, "We do have stock in the Australian zone which is well managed and there is no problem eating from that fish stock." School shark, for instance, is in strife but gummy shark is not under pressure.

About 30 species are subject to the catch system the authority monitors. The Bureau of Rural Science's Fishery Status Report says that 19 species are overfished or subject to overfishing out of a total of 97. That's less than 20 per cent.

"It is hard to get it across in a useful way, that [with] many of our domestic species, our view is that they are sustainable and people should be confident that they are purchasing a sustainably harvested product," Rayns says.

The other complication is that some overfishing is through no fault of Australia's actions. "Many of those overfished stocks are managed through international fishery arrangements," Rayns says. "Swordfish is an example. The EU, South Pacific countries and the US all fish on the high seas for the same stock of fish and we see a part of that stock in our fishing zone."

It's not just a matter of fresh fish, either. It may come as a surprise to learn that most of what Australians consume is tinned or frozen, and imported, and half the imports hail from Thailand and New Zealand.

"The issue I have with the guide is that it is generic," Rayns says. "Sharks for instance. Some of our shark species are definitely sustainable. The [fisheries status report] shows that the majority of our fish species are sustainably harvested. The few that aren't, the AMCS have focused on, and we agree with them on that."

Not everyone does, however. Ted Loveday is the managing director of Seafood Services Australia, established by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and the Australian Seafood Industry Council in 2001 to advise the fishing industry.

He feels that Australia's commercial fisherfolk get too much stick and not enough credit. "The AMCS pamphlet is probably well intentioned but quite subjective," he says. "It doesn't reflect the national framework for fishery sustainability in Australia which is, without doubt, the most rigorous environmental framework for fisheries in the world."

Loveday says there is an ideological difference between the positions of the society and Seafood Services Australia. "Under our federal environmental legislation," he says, "all Australian fisheries that are managed by the Commonwealth and all state ones that have an export component have to be accredited as complying with the Australian government guidelines for the ecological sustainability of our fisheries."

Neilson's response is that this is setting the bar too low. "We acknowledge that on a world scale we are one of the better countries. But it is not helpful to compare ourselves to countries which are experiencing ocean collapse."

So what is the answer to the question of whether to buy that orange roughy in the shop, that swordfish in an Italian restaurant, that eastern gemfish, flake, southern bluefin tuna or redfish?

"We all need to look at where our food is coming from," Neilson says. "If the fishmonger doesn't know and enough people ask, he will be obliged to find out. It is a conversation and a journey. It is about all of us as a collective, the public and the industry, working towards a sustainable future."

Having that conversation means knowing what questions to ask.

"What the consumer should be asking themselves is: 'is this fishery judged to be fishing at a sustainable level?'" Loveday says. "Or, if the species is under threat, is it being fished at a level that allows the stock to be rebuilt?"

Methods matter, too: line-catching is a more discriminating way to fish than seafloor trawling. The yield is lower with line-caught seafood and more expensive - but what price the future?

None of this is easy when you're standing in the fish shop trying to work out what to have for dinner. Confusion reigns on both sides of the counter.

Wayne Hulme from Christie's Seafood at the Sydney Fish Market recommends buying something else if a fish is listed as a vulnerable species.

"There are so many varieties to choose from that if a fish is in danger, let's leave it alone for a while. I suggest that you use something else like leatherjacket, flathead or snapper or even crab or squid. When you are talking about sustainable fish, you are after fish that mature quickly and have high spawning and growth rates."

Of course, our job as responsible consumers would be much easier if the information were easier to find. The various websites are as impenetrable as their acronyms - AFMA, FRDC and SSA.

As well as more navigable internet access, we also need forthright seafood labelling. Rayns and Loveday are enthusiastic about establishing a brand, an equivalent of the Fair Trade logo.

That idea is still at a discussion stage for the authorities. Meanwhile, the Lakes and Coorong fisheries represented by the Southern Fishermen's Association are taking matters into their own nets. They've scooped up the brand concept and applied for accreditation under the international Marine Stewardship Council scheme. As Hulme says, "It's about how you fish, what you fish and how you protect the environment. Look after it and it will be OK."

Got an opinion on the sustainable seafood debate? Air it on our blog, [www.smh.com.au/goodliving](http://www.smh.com.au/goodliving) .

<http://news.brisbanetimes.com.au/poachers-detained-in-torres-strait/20080226-1uz6.html>

## Poachers detained in Torres Strait

February 26, 2008 - 6:09PM


Eight vessels have been seized and 71 people detained by customs officers for fishing illegally in Torres Strait.

Australian authorities seized the motorised "banana" boats at the weekend after a Coastwatch aircraft spotted their crew poaching sea cucumber, also called trepang, near Warrior Reef, customs said in a statement.

A total of 71 fishers from Papua New Guinea were detained briefly before being taken to Daru Island and handed over to PNG authorities.

Customs said seven of the eight illegal boats had been fishing for sea cucumber, a delicacy in parts of Asia, while the eighth vessel had been fishing for tropical rock lobsters.

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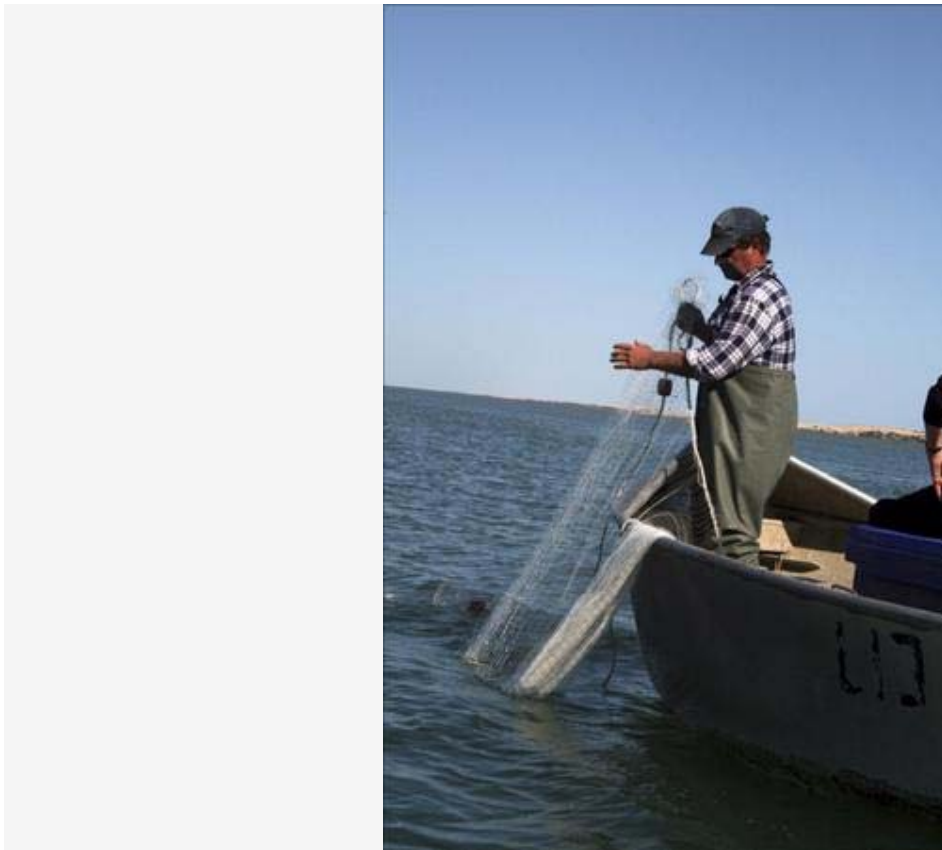
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/good-living/net-profits/2008/02/26/1203788317499.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

**Fairfax Digital**

## Net profits

February 26, 2008 - 2:22PM

**Age-old habits are still strong among Coorong fishermen, writes Helen Greenwood.**



Waterway born... Garry Hera-Singh hauls in his nets.

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- Sustainable fishing [Here's the catch](#)
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THE COORONG is quiet. The air shimmers and cormorants wheel in formation in the sky. Sand dunes ripple along the ocean side of the lagoon that is part of the wetland ecosystem at the mouth of the Murray Darling River basin in South Australia. The world seems still.

The road to this magical place of beaches, freshwater lakes, estuaries and salt pans runs through flat land and rolling hills, barely disturbing the black Angus steer that have strayed off their pastures to graze along sandy shores.

We pass the beachcombing cattle and a pink saltpan glimmering like moire silk to get to Meningie, a small settlement with a motel whose dining room hangs over the edge of Lake Albert.

Tracy Hill, the secretary of the Southern Fisherman's Association, which represents the commercial fisheries of the Lakes and Coorong, greets us here with a firm handshake and climbs into our van.

She guides us down the road past Lake Albert and the larger Lake Alexandrina to the neck of the Coorong (which means narrow neck).

Her husband, Glen, a fisherman and a member of the SFA, and Garry Hera-Singh, the president of this 160-year-old association, emerge from timber huts to meet us.

Glen Hill came to the Coorong 17 years ago and stayed. It's as plain as the zinc cream on his face that he is in love with this waterway. Hera-Singh, a fourth-generation fisherman, is to the waterway born. His paternal granddad threw his nets out further up the estuary, and his maternal granddad pushed off from the hut that bears the name Rumbelow.

Thirty-four families have licences to fish in this ecosystem and their businesses employ 73 people directly. Many of them, like the Hills, also process their catch of mainly yellow-eye mullet, mulloway, golden perch and pippis. They bring \$6.7million to a regional economy that has been hard hit by drought.

For the past nine years, Hera-Singh, the Hills and their fellow SFA members have been working to get their fishing paradise recognised as a sustainable fishing zone.

When Hera-Singh took over the family hut and the fishing licences, he continued to fish the way his grandfathers had, and to manage the marine environment as the original Ngarrindjeri people did for thousands of years.

The SFA, which calls itself a "heritage fishery", proudly uses age-old practices. They fish more than one species, they rely on the fish to come to them and they pluck them out of the nets one by one. The only mechanisation is the outboard motors on their flat-bottomed boats.

Hera-Singh and Glen Hill push their boats out from shore where pelicans wait to pick up the scraps. The fishermen putt-putt slowly over the mirrored surface to set their nets by hand. They have only 25 nets in the water at any one time. "I know where I catch and what I catch," Hera-Singh says.

They harvest using a rotational system, pulling in mulloway when the mullet or perch aren't running and vice versa. If the estuary fin-fish aren't available, they go for the cockles on the ocean side of the peninsula. "So we're not putting pressure on any one species," Tracy Hill says. But these fishermen realised long ago that it wasn't enough to practise good ecology. "We needed to demonstrate they were a sustainable fishery or we wouldn't last long," Hera-Singh says.

So, in 1996, the families began work on producing an environmental management plan for the Lakes and Coorong. They agreed on this industry-driven initiative in 1998, the first commercial fishery in the world to do so.

The World Wide Fund for Nature supplied the money for the fishery to go through the costly, time-consuming process of being certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, a non-government organisation set up in 1997 to develop and audit sustainable fisheries.

The fishermen spend 60 to 80 hours a week on the water so it's taken them nine years to move through the assessment process.

Now, the SFA is waiting for the final tick on its documentation, hoping for completion before the council's Sustainable Seafood Day on March 4.

The council's stamp of approval will validate the fisherfolk of the Lakes and Coorong as the key stewards of this marine region. "We're concerned about the whole food chain, not just what we catch," Glen says. "If, like most fishermen, we just keep fishing and don't work for the future, we won't have a future."

For more information about Sustainable Seafood Day on March 4, see <http://www.msc.org>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/27/2173587.htm?section=justin>

## Albatross and long-line fishing study

Posted Wed Feb 27, 2008 8:00am AEDT

Updated Wed Feb 27, 2008 8:50am AEDT



Scientists estimate 300,000 sea birds drown each year when they eat fish caught on long lines. (AAP: Australian Antarctic Division/Graham Robertson)

The CSIRO in Hobart is involved in a study to determine the relationship between fishing activity in the Atlantic and declining albatross populations.

It is being funded by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

Scientists will collect data from fishing agencies and biologists to develop mathematic models of the interaction between the albatross and hooks from long-line fishing boats.

British Antarctic Survey ecologist, Richard Phillips, says the seabirds are late breeders.

"If you increase un-natural sources of mortality, such as that due to fishing, that pretty much automatically leads to a population decline," he said.

Resource modeller with the CSIRO in Hobart, Geoff Tuck, says the study will also make recommendations about better managing Atlantic fisheries to reduce the effect on seabirds.

"Area closures or reductions in effort in particular areas or in particular fleets and see how that may improve things," he said.

He says fishing agencies are currently setting about 400 million hooks across the Atlantic.

"That's a lot of hooks and even though a vessel may catch either no birds on a particular set or maybe only one bird or two birds, the problem is when you multiply that up across millions and millions of hooks then it becomes a problem for our seabirds."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/27/2173799.htm>



## Constance airs marine park fishing zone worries

Posted 11 hours 28 minutes ago

The New South Wales far south coast's MP, Andrew Constance, says he is worried that new legislation will give the State Government open slather to change controversial fishing zones in the Batemans Marine Park.

Mr Constance says the move will allow the Environment Minister to redefine the no-take areas without public consultation.

And Mr Constance says the legislation does not stop there.

"We are also going to see a doubling of the penalty units associated with any breaches within the marine park and to that end it is also going to broaden the authorities in terms of those who can issue fines," he said.

"This bill is being rammed through the Parliament without the consultation necessary to engage the community about what their views might be."

<http://www.peopleandplanet.net/doc.php?id=3212>

## *Marine invaders: a worldwide threat*

Posted: 25 Feb 2008

**Some 84 per cent of the world's marine ecosystems have been infected by invasive species — and this number could be even higher due to under-reporting, according to a new study from the Nature Conservancy.**



Comb jellies introduced to the Black Sea from the United States in shipping ballast water destroyed commercial fishing, costing thousands of jobs. © L. Madin, Woods Hole, Oceanographic Institute

The report quotes the case of the population of comb jellyfish sucked into the ballast of a US tanker and shipped halfway around the world in 1993, where it was unceremoniously dumped into the Black Sea when the tanker discharged its ballast water.

This event caused one of the most alarming species invasions in European history. At their peak in the mid-1990s, the comb jelly invaders made up 90 per cent of living organisms in the Black Sea — the sheer weight of the invasive population exceeded the weight of the world's entire fish catch. The jellyfish destroyed the Black Sea's commercial fishing industry and cost thousands of jobs.



The Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) is a migrating crab which has invaded Europe and, more recently, North America. It contributes to the local extinction of native invertebrates and causes erosion by its intensive burrowing activity. Photo: Stephan Gollasch, GoConsult

The Chinese mitten crab is one of more than 200 exotic species which have invaded North American waters. These small crabs, which were brought to the San Francisco Bay via ships' ballast water, reproduce rapidly and have spread throughout the Delta. They may imperil the state's threatened and endangered salmon populations due to the crabs' appetite for juvenile salmon.

"The scale of this problem is vast," said Jennifer Molnar, conservation scientist at The Nature Conservancy and lead author of the study, *Assessing the Global Threat of Invasive Species to Marine Biodiversity*.

"Every day, thousands of vessels cross our oceans with invasive species hitchhiking on their hulls," Molnar said. "Because of this, as many as 10,000 species are estimated to be in transit at any one time."

#### Difficult to remove

The study also found that most of the invasive species that have taken hold around the world — from San Francisco Bay to the eastern Mediterranean Sea — are difficult if not impossible to remove. Other major findings of the study include:

- Many marine invasives harm other species and disrupt entire natural systems.
- 57 per cent of marine invasive species in our study can be classified as harmful to the native ecosystems.
- Most invasive species are unintentionally transported to new habitats through shipping.
- Many species are introduced through the farming of non-native fish and shellfish.



Chinese mitten crab infestation. Photo: Stephan Gollasch, GoConsult

Although only a small fraction of the many marine species introduced outside of their native area are able to thrive and invade new habitats, their impact can be dramatic and have transformed marine habitats around the world. The most harmful of these invaders displace native species, and change natural structures and food webs.



Caulerpa is a tropical seaweed that has wreaked havoc in the Mediterranean and in Australia. Once established, it is quickly transported on the anchors of fishing and recreational boats. It overgrows native seagrass and is toxic to many fish. © Alexander Meinesz, [invasives.org](http://invasives.org)

Caulerpa, a tropical seaweed that has invaded the Mediterranean and in Australia, is transported on the anchors of fishing and recreational boats. It is toxic to many fish and blankets large areas of the sea floor where it has invaded the Mediterranean, smothering native species and getting tangled in boat propellers.

Alien invasive species can also significantly alter human lives, and have damaged economies by diminishing fisheries, fouling ships' hulls, and clogging intake pipes. Some can even directly impact human health by causing disease.

Stopping invasions before they happen makes economic as well as environmental sense, as the catastrophe in the Black Sea demonstrates.

But dealing with invasions when they occur is very expensive and rarely effective. For example, the United States spends \$120 billion annually on the control and mitigation of impacts of more than 800 invasive species infestations.

Invasives typically hitch rides to new habitats either through the discharge of ballast water which ships carry for stability or through the "bio-fouling" of ships hulls, when aquatic species hitchhike to new places on the bottom of ships. Coordinated action from governments is needed to prevent further introductions through these pathways.

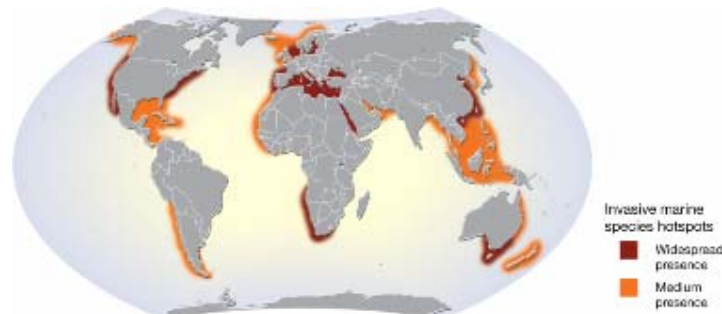
The new report provides evidence to support ongoing efforts to improve ballast water management practices and to tackle the problem of the fouling of ships' hulls and lines. However, the major impacts of ship-fouling species suggest that ballast water agreements alone may be insufficient.

The study also confirms the role of aquaculture operations such as non-native fish and shellfish farming in marine invasions. Stricter, industry-wide control measures should be developed and enforcement strengthened to restrict intentional and accidental introductions of harmful invasive species.

The study could also inform biosecurity decisions by helping identify species that have not yet invaded an ecoregion but have had considerable impacts on similar habitats elsewhere.

### Government action needed

It is vital that governments begin working now to make strong decisions on invasive species that will halt new introductions around the world before this hidden threat becomes more costly to people and nature, says the report.



**Invasive species in the marine environment - problem regions.** The locations of major problem areas for invasive species infestations or occurrence of exotic species in the marine environment. Credit: UNEP. [Click to enlarge](#)

To counter the devastating effects of invasive species around the world, the Nature Conservancy is encouraging governments to make a strong decision on invasive species that will:

- Halt new introductions through priority pathways;
- Support screening of new species before they are introduced; and
- Ensure countries have the technical and financial resources required to combat invasions.

And governments this year have an unprecedented opportunity to address these issues: Marine invasives will be a top agenda item at a meeting in May of the UN-sponsored Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn, Germany.

## Links

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

[Warmer world may mean fewer fish](#)

[UNEP report: In dead Water: Merging of climate change with pollution, over-harvest, and infestations in the world's fishing grounds](#)

[Convention on Biological Diversity](#)

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,23271150-5006301,00.html>

## I saw huge shark kill my mate, diver tells Coroner's Court

Article from: **The Advertiser**

ANDREW DOWDELL, COURT REPORTER

February 25, 2008 12:00pm



Justin Rowntree leaves the Coroner's Court today after telling how he saw his mate Jarrod Stehbens killed by a Great White Shark. Picture: DAVID CRONIN

**A FORMER University of Adelaide student today relived the horrific shark attack which claimed the life of his 23-year old diving partner Jarrod Stehbens.**

Researcher Justin Rowntree appeared in the Coroner's Court where he described the fatal Great White attack at Glenelg in August 2005.

"I was looking at Jarrod when I felt a whack on the back which rotated me around," Mr Rowntree said.

"Initially I thought it was a dolphin but pretty quickly I realised it was not."

Mr Stehbens, a "highly experienced diver" then fought for his life against the five-metre Great White shark.

"It went straight towards Jarrod, initially he whacked it directly on the snout and it seemed to go away momentarily," Mr Rowntree said.

"Then it came back and took his leg and dragged him under ... it happened like a flash."

The university students were almost finished their dive for cuttlefish eggs at the widely-used Glenelg Tyre Reef when the shark attacked.

Mr Rowntree said the fatal dive would have been Mr Stehbens' last in South Australia before he went to live in Germany.

Neither diver was wearing an electrical device known as a shark shield at the time.

Mr Rowntree told the court he believed there was a "low risk" of encountering a Great White shark off Adelaide's suburban beaches.

"Sometimes we would have a bit of a joke about it, just knowing that they are out there," he said.

Mr Rowntree said while he was unaware there were shark shields on the boat, he probably would not have worn one anyway.

"The ones that existed, that apparently were on the boat at the time were big cumbersome things," he said.

Mr Rowntree said the shark shields were "annoying" to wear and often gave divers small electric shocks underwater.

The court heard that the wearing of shark shields was made compulsory by the university after the tragic attack.

The inquest before Deputy Coroner Anthony Schapel continues.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/25/2171962.htm>



## Researchers call for help in endangered shark study

Posted Mon Feb 25, 2008 4:21pm AEDT

Researchers are appealing to Territory fishermen to be on alert for rare and endangered river sharks.

Dr Ian Field is leading a collaborative shark study by the Australian Institute of Marine Science and Charles Darwin University.

He says he's eager to hear from fishermen who may have caught or sighted the threatened northern river and spear tooth sharks.

"If they have had any interaction with some of our rare and endangered sharks, especially glyphis species, the northern river shark and spear tooth sharks.

"We are not sure if they are common or not, but they occur in our estuaries and rivers.

"We really need to understand what's keeping our ecosystems healthy at the moment.

"This will have a knock on effect to the larger fish such as barramundi and jewfish."

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,23277100-662,00.html>

## Port Phillip Bay given all-clear after dredging

Article from: **Herald Sun**

By Peter Mickelborough and Alice Coster

February 26, 2008 02:15am

**THE first independent tests of water quality in Port Phillip Bay since dredging started show water is now clearer at Rosebud than before the \$1 billion project began.**

The findings appear to contradict claims by anti-dredging protesters that deepening the bay's shipping channel are clouding the water.

The tests were conducted after 10 days of dredging by the *Queen of the Netherlands* in the southern shipping channel off Rosebud.

The Port of Melbourne Corporation said it was pleasing the tests conducted for the *Herald Sun* were consistent with readings from its own turbidity monitoring buoys.

"They continue to show conformance with the environmental management plan and that no environmental limits have been reached," a PoMC spokesman said.

Blue Wedges president Jenny Warfe said the results did not sit with the anecdotal evidence she had received.

"It is not what the community is saying," Ms Warfe said.

"They are finding it much less pleasant to swim. The water is looking murky.

"Neighbours have been banging on my door saying the water looks terrible."

But Ms Warfe said the effect of turbidity on swimmers was of less concern than the irreversible impacts of dredging.

"I'm not convinced two data points in 14 days is any evidence the dredging is good."

The *Herald Sun* collected samples off the Rosebud and Queenscliff piers last Monday.

The water samples were tested by ALS Laboratory Group for the amount of suspended sediment.

The results were compared with readings taken on February 4, four days before dredging began.

The level of light-reflecting sediment in the water at Rosebud fell from 3.9 nephelometric turbidity units (NTUs) before dredging to less than 0.1 NTUs 10 days after dredging began.

Sediment levels at Queenscliff rose slightly from 2.5 NTUs to 3.8 NTUs.

Both readings are well below safe levels.

Water specialist Simon Roberts, from Monash University, said turbidity measures were notoriously variable.

"The long-term data is what we need to see if it is a continuing trend or not," Prof Roberts said.

He said turbidity levels depended on tidal and wind influences which would move the plume around.

Weather and tide conditions on the bay were similar on both days the *Herald Sun* collected its samples.

The PoMC is monitoring turbidity from 11 buoys around the bay.

In the first week of dredging, they recorded a peak of 12 NTUs at the buoy closest to the dredge.

This is a third of the 35 NTUs limit in that area.

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/port-backs-bay-toxic-dump/2008/02/22/1203467354389.html>



# Port backs bay toxic dump

February 22, 2008 - 2:00PM

Stirring up two million cubic metres of toxic silt and dumping it in a containment facility in Port Phillip Bay is "best practice", the Port of Melbourne says.

Work on the containment bund in the north of the bay is set to begin on March 1 after the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) won the right to expand dredging in the Federal Court yesterday.

PoMC chief executive officer Stephen Bradford said the channel deepening project and planned toxic dump had been signed off by an independent inquiry.

"The inquiry also noted that the confinement of the dredged material was a substantial improvement over historical approaches," he said today.

"It said that the bund and capping process is safer than past practices and is considered best practice."

The port will dump two million cubic metres of toxic silt dredged from the Yarra River into a clay storage bund in the north of the bay.

Under the environmental management plan, the material will have 140 days to settle before being capped by sand.

The port is banned from dredging in the Yarra River, pending a federal court challenge by opponents the Blue Wedges on March 3.

Mr Bradford said the port was considering seeking court costs from the Blue Wedges, whose case was described by Justice Anthony North yesterday as "very weak" and unsustainable.

"That's an issue we need to think through, we haven't come to a conclusion on that," Mr Bradford said.

"I guess we've asked our legal team to focus on the case itself and, particularly, urging the court to allow continuation of this critical project."

Mr Bradford urged the public to heed the 200-metre exclusion zone around the Queen of the Netherlands dredge this weekend, following recent breaches by protesters.

AAP

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/25/2171886.htm>



## China to spend billions cleaning polluted coast

Posted Mon Feb 25, 2008 3:35pm AEDT

China plans to spend 130 billion yuan (\$A19.7 billion) on cleaning up one of the country's most contaminated coastal areas, Bohai Bay, state media reports.

The project will monitor seawater quality, set up treatment plants, tackle industrial pollution and establish marine parks, the *China Daily* reported, citing an unnamed State Oceanic Administration official.

Bohai Bay, about 150 kilometres east of the capital Beijing, is part of the Bohai Sea, which previous reports have said could take at least 200 years to clean-up.

Industrial sewage, pesticides, fertilisers, much of it from the Yellow River, and the dumping of rubbish have left it severely polluted.

The move to clean-up Bohai Bay is part of the country's efforts to rehabilitate its coastal areas and improve their contribution to economic growth, the report said.

However the Government frequently announces environmental clean-up projects involving billions of dollars, many of which apparently have little effect.

- AFP

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=383943>



## Fishing writer battles flesh-eating bug

Monday Feb 25 17:22 AEDT

A New Zealand fishing writer remains in a serious condition at Christchurch Hospital with a flesh-eating disease - apparently after being bitten by a fish.

A hospital spokeswoman said the author of the 1997 guide, Salmon Fever, Ross Millichamp, was "still seriously ill".

Doctors are reported to have suggested that he may have been bitten by a fish while fishing for barracuda and blue cod off the coast of Stewart Island last week.

Millichamp, a manager for Fish and Game, was diagnosed with a rare bacterial infection, necrotising fasciitis, after he had to be evacuated from the hunting and fishing trip with friends.

He was reported to have initially experienced flu-like symptoms which turned into pain and stiffness in his shoulder and he was taken by helicopter to Invercargill Hospital.

At Invercargill the infection was diagnosed and surgeons cut out part of the muscle around the affected shoulder area last week to try to stop the infection spreading.

He was then moved to intensive care at Christchurch Hospital, where he has been unconscious and on life-support, with his wife Ginny by his side.

Necrotising fasciitis can destroy skin and the soft tissues beneath it, including fat and the tissue covering the muscles.

One form of the disease has been reported to occur where wounds are exposed to ocean water or the drippings from raw saltwater fish, including oysters.



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<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/25/2171135.htm>



## Rain halts Clarence prawn trawling

Posted Mon Feb 25, 2008 8:32am AEDT

The Clarence River has been closed to prawn trawling because juvenile prawns are being flushed downstream by good rainfall.

Industry spokesman John Harrison says the closure includes the river and extends out to sea and was initiated by commercial fishermen working with the Department of Primary Industries.

He says the closure will help maintain a sustainable fishery.

Mr Harrison says the trawling closure will be reviewed next Monday, but other fishing methods are still allowed.

"It's only closed to the estuary prawn trawl fleet," he said.

"Pocket netting for prawns is still allowed, as is other types of commercial fishing like trapping and meshing.

"The rain pushes the juvenile prawns down the river.

"The prawns that are right down at the mouth of the river and in Lake Wooloweyah are quite small, so the commercial fishermen have decided to give it a spell."

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200802/s2171353.htm>

## Prawners expecting best season in years

Monday, 25/02/2008

Queensland prawn trawler operators predict this year's catch could be one of the best in two decades.

Flooded rivers along Queensland's east coast this summer have produced ideal breeding conditions for prawns.

The harvest gets under way on the first of March and Mackay trawler Danny Pope says it will take a little while for prawn numbers to build up.

"We'll need a settling down time, the fresh water to settle a bit. Hopefully by the start of the season things will have settled a bit, there will be some areas that won't like the Burdekin that will take time" he said.

"It's probably getting back to about 1990 that this year is looking better than then. We haven't had a good banana season for a long time, and yes we're quietly optimistic about it."

<http://www.news.com.au/mercury/story/0,22884,23270365-5007221,00.html>



## End of industry, say angry scallop fishers

Article from: **MERCURY**

MICHELLE PAINE

February 25, 2008 12:00am

**TASMANIA'S scallop industry faces closure as cheap imports squeeze out local fishing operators, says the industry representative.**

And the popular recreational fishery could be killed off if the State Government keeps allowing bigger catches without science to back it up, the Tasmanian Scallop Fishermens Association says.

"Imports are destroying us," chairman John Hammond said last night. "Very few restaurants in Tasmania serve Tasmanian scallops. It breaks my bloody heart."

He said the industry was down to 25 operators who relied on other fishing to stay afloat.

"Last year most made no money at all after paying for fuel. We're all going to have to look at the economics," he said.

"France was our major market and they're getting farmed scallops from Chile and Argentina."

Mr Hammond and others are angry at the announcement by Primary Industries Minister David Llewellyn last week of an expansion of the recreational season.

The fishery did not take a big chunk of the commercial fishery and was close to shore, where commercials cannot go.

But Mr Hammond said Tasmanians might lose the pastime if the seasons continued without surveys to show the numbers were sustainable.

He also said it was wrong that commercial fishers had to spend their own money and time on surveys -- which he said they were happy to do -- when he suspected surveys were not even done properly for the recreational catch.

"It should be the same for everyone, that's all we're saying," he said.

Mr Hammond said last week's announcement was more to boost the political stocks of the Government.

More than 5300 licensed recreational dive fishers were expected for this season alone, from March 15 to July 31.

Mr Llewellyn increased the daily bag limit to 50 and extended the season by a month.

Mr Hammond said amateur dive fishing was efficient and a great recreation, but he suspected that the areas most used -- Coles Bay, Triabunna and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel -- could be suffering.

"With the sea stars chomping their way through thousands of tonnes of scallops, we need proper dive surveys in the Channel," he said.

Mr Llewellyn last week urged fishers to take only legal size scallops.

Free measures are available at Service Tasmania.

<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=38210>

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### **Pollution forces tuna plant in Marshall Islands to spend and delay opening**

Posted at 17:20 on 24 February, 2008 UTC

**A new tuna processing plant in the Marshall Islands is facing a more than US\$500,000 over a damaged sewage pipe near the soon-to-open facility.**

Scheduled to open at the end of last year, the tuna plant managed by Pan Pacific Foods, a subsidiary of Shanghai Deep Sea Fisheries Company, has faced a series of delays.

The company was planning use salt water close to shore and filter it through its fresh water making units for its fish processing operations.

But underwater surveys by both Pan Pacific Foods and Majuro Water and Sewer Company show the damaged sewage outfall pipe is clogged with rocks and raw sewage is now spewing out close to shore.

The plant general manager, Don Xu, says a study shows that e. coli pollution in the ocean water outside the plant is 90 times higher than the legal limit.

He says it will thousands of dollars to find a new water source.

Meanwhile, the Marshall Islands Utility company says the water company is now deciding whether temporary repairs can be made.

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/gen/2008/02/25/news/papua.new.guinea.officials.lure.pinoy.tuna.investors.html>



Monday, February 25, 2008

## Papua New Guinea officials lure Pinoy tuna investors

GOVERNMENT officials from tuna-rich Papua New Guinea arrived here on Wednesday to entice more Filipino investments in their country's fishing industry.

Gabriel Kapris, Papua New Guinea Minister of Trade and Commerce, urged local industry players to expand operations in their country or put up new investments there.

[Post here your Valentine's Day greetings](#)

Presently, two tuna industry players-RD Tuna Cannery (PNG) Ltd., a subsidiary of homegrown business empire RD Group of Companies, and Frabelle (PNG) Ltd. of Frabelle Fishing Corp. are operating tuna canneries in Papua New Guinea.

Kapris said they have set up a marine industry park to boost foreign investments on the tuna industry.

"We are now open for more investments in the tuna industry," he added, expressing hopes Filipino fishing companies would take the opportunity.

Kapris and Damien Gamiandu, Papua New Guinea ambassador to the Philippines, came here as guests of local fishing magnate Rodrigo Rivera Sr., owner of RD Group of Companies.

Earlier, the Papua New Guinea government hailed RD Tuna Cannery for pioneering canned tuna there that spurs its economy and for being the largest employer in Madang province.

RD Tuna Cannery has a work force of some 3,000 individuals in Papua New Guinea, reports said, adding that it supplies the bulk of Papua New Guinea's export quota of 1,000 metric tons to the European Union.

Frabelle, on the other hand, launched its US\$31.25 million tuna cannery in Lae City, Morobe province about two years ago. The company produces the "Isabella" canned sardines through outsourcing arrangements with various local processors.

Kapri thanked the two Filipino companies that are operating in Papua New Guinea, saying that expansion plans or new ventures by other Philippine companies will be welcomed by his government.

Last year, the Philippines formally sought the forging of a bilateral fishing agreement with Papua New Guinea, as well as Palau, to sustain the local tuna industry due to repeated prodding of industry players.

Malcolm Sarmiento, director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), has said the National Government through the fisheries bureau is keen on having fishing access for tuna with the two Pacific Island nations to further boost the local tuna industry.

Clamor for the government to forge fishing agreements with tuna resource-rich countries have been lingering in the past few years.

During the 9th National Tuna Congress here last year, the plenary approved a resolution reiterating the tuna industry's demand for the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to fast track forging of bilateral or regional fishing pacts with neighboring countries and the Pacific Island nations.

"The domestic tuna catch cannot sufficiently supply the requirements of the tuna canneries and processing plants, which are increasingly dependent on the supply of tuna caught outside the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone," the resolution reads.

"The establishment of more fishing access arrangements is essential to further boost the competitive advantage of the Philippine tuna industry as well as safeguard the livelihood of thousands of fishermen, processing plant workers and their families who are dependent on the industry," it added.

The Philippine tuna industry accounts for about 12 percent of the country's total fisheries production and about 120,000 jobs and accounts for an average turnover of \$ 420 million per year, industry records said. **(BSS)**

<http://www.thisisnorthscotland.co.uk/displayNode.jsp?nodeId=149806&command=displayContent&sourceNode=149798&contentPK=19973482&folderPk=85861&pNodeId=149794>



*The Press and Journal*

## FISHERMEN MARK 'END OF DARK DAYS'

08:50 - 25 February 2008

The transformation of Scotland's fishing industry and its renewed optimism was confirmed in Fraserburgh at the weekend as the town's harbour commissioners resurrected their annual dinner and trophy presentation - after a 17-year absence.

The event saw sibling skippers Derek and John Watt, of the Banff-registered Excel, and Mark Masson, of the Broch-registered Valhalla, receive the port's annual top gross catch awards, sponsored by local solicitor MacRae Stephen and Co and department store Maitland's.

The Watt brothers fish mostly for prawns, while Mr Masson pursues white fish. They each paid tribute to their crews.

First Minister Alex Salmond joined the celebration and told guests the change since the SNP came to power last May had been significant, especially after Scotland managed to negotiate its own deal at last year's European fisheries talks.

He paid tribute to the efforts of Rural Affairs Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead in securing a deal that Scottish White Fish Producers Association vice-chairman John Watt said was now being eyed as the future for the catching sector by numerous other European countries.

Mr Salmond said the negotiations that gave fishermen conservation credits and voluntary closures to protect juvenile and spawning cod had not been an easy task as Europe's Common Fisheries Policy had "been dreamed up by the world's biggest imbeciles".

He added: "What has been achieved shows that it's entirely possible both to argue against it (the CFP) and understand the contradictions in it while working to enhance the position of fishermen."

Mr Salmond said the importance of fishing to Scotland's social fabric and the economy could not be underestimated.

John Watt said confidence had grown significantly in recent months and was in stark contrast to the position just a few years ago when many thought the industry had no future after a series of quota cuts and a decommissioning scheme that devastated the white fish fleet.

"The industry went through a lot of turmoil and a lot of pain, but we are now on the up and up.

"What happened in Brussels was a major change and the deal we came home with is the best we've had for many a year.

"It allows Scotland to show the rest of Europe that we are responsible, that we are proactive and want a sustainable fishery.

"There's a buzz about our industry that we've not seen for years. Our industry has a future."

John Watt called on fishermen to ensure they complied with the voluntary measures that were central to the December deal.

Commissioners' convener George Sutherland said the resurrection of the trophy presentation marked renewed optimism and the end of the dark days that saw black fish landed to keep boats viable.

The commissioners were determined to keep investing in facilities at the harbour to maintain the Broch's position as Europe's top shellfish port.

He called on Mr Salmond to consider Scottish Government funding for an £8-£10million harbour deepening scheme.

Mr Sutherland pointed to greater profitability in the fleet, upwards of 10 new boats being built and greater numbers of young people training for a life at sea.

<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/news/money/story.html?id=93144e4d-c43f-45d0-ac50-b95839dcb18f>

## A sea-friendly way to farm fish

### *Salmon in closed containers won't interfere with natural stocks*

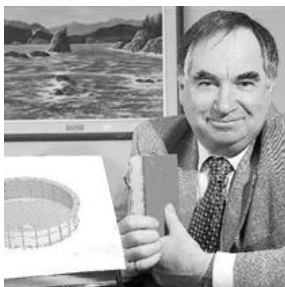
#### *The Province*

Published: Sunday, February 24, 2008

Closed containers are the wave of the future when it comes to farming salmon, according to AgriMarine Industries.

After successful tryouts in prototype closed containers, Campbell River-based AgriMarine will unveil its first full-size farm in May.

CEO Richard Buchanan says the containers are made of a laminated fibreglass that's used for Arctic rescue vessels and high-end yachts.



[View Larger Image](#)

*Richard Buchanan holds a piece of the fibreglass composite used to build closed tanks for a fish farm opening in May.*

*Les Bazso -- the Province*

"It's stronger than steel but lighter than aluminum," he said.

"We originally thought we'd use aluminum, but there were corrosion issues, and the fibreglass is actually lighter." The closed containers recirculate sea water once per hour, keeping the fish swimming against the man-made current and making for leaner flesh, Buchanan said.

It takes about 14 months until the Chinook salmon are big enough to harvest.

At that point, fish farmers sieve out the most mature fish for harvesting and leave smaller fry to fatten up before sending them to market.

"It's a seine net, just like you'd have on the ocean," said Buchanan, an engineer who has 26 years' experience in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries industries.

"We've got rollers [that] will take the largest fish, and the others go back in the containers, just like a big sieve." Traditional sea-based fish farms create giant piles of excrement. Sea-lice infestations not only damage farmed fish but can spread to wild salmon stocks.

Buchanan claims that with closed containers the excrement will drop to the bottom of the containers, where it can be neutralized, composted and treated to minimize environmental effects before the water is recirculated into the ocean.

According to a confidential information memorandum provided by the company, plans are afoot to test the full-size technology at Middle Bay near Campbell River, then export the technology worldwide.

"With success from its Middle Bay Project, the company is planning to deploy the instalment of the systems and implementation of the business model worldwide," the document says.

"The company is working with the Chinese government and has selected sites for its solid-wall containment systems in fresh-water and marine environments, for the production of economically and ecologically sustainable fresh fish in China." Fish farming has been controversial in Canada. Responding to public controversy, a moratorium on new fish farms was instituted in this province.

AgriMarine clearly looks forward to a less-regulated environment in China.

"In B.C., there are certain regulatory requirements pertaining to the siting of salmon farms," the company document says.

"In comparison, there are fewer regulations on fish farming in China, and the government is encouraging environmentally sustainable technologies for rearing fin fish in clean mountain reservoirs.

"The company's operations in China are expected to result in significantly lower costs as compared to its Middle Bay operations." Closed containers are considered to be one of the most palatable ways to increase fish farming without upsetting natural fish stocks and environmentalists.

There are currently several ways to operate fish farms: n A system such as AgriMarine's prototype, with closed containers in the ocean.

n A land-based sea-water system, with closed containers on land circulating ocean water drawn from the nearby sea.

n A land-based fresh-water system, arguably the preferred solution, with closed containers on land that circulate fresh water, eliminating opportunities for sea-lice infection.

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